

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 27 July 1967, at 10.30 a.m.

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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COLLECTION

Chairman:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT (Poland)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. D. KOSTOV
Mr. G. GAVRILOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Mr. A. BERNIER

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. P. WINKLER
Mr. V. VAJNAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCILO
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. E. FRANCO
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. J. CASTAÑEDA
Miss E. AGUIRRE

Nigeria:

Alhaji SULE KOLO
Mr. B.O. TONWE

Poland:

Mr. J. GOLDBLAT
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO
Mr. O. IONESCO
Mr. C. GEORGESCO
Mr. A. COROLIANU

Sweden:

Mr. A. EDELSTAM
Mr. R. BOMAN

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A.A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. V.P. SUSLOV
Mr. Y.K. NAZARKIN

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. O. SIRRY
Mr. M. SHAKER

United Kingdom:

Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. I.F. PORTER
Mr. R.I.T. CROMARTIE

United States of America:

Mr. W.C. FOSTER
Mr. G. BUNN
Mr. G. BREAM
Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROFITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Poland): I declare open the three hundred and seventeenth plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

2. Mr. CHRISTOV (Bulgaria) (translation from French): The Bulgarian delegation hopes, as do all the delegations here, that very soon we shall have before us a draft treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons which will enable our debates to go forward more speedily and to enter their final phase.

3. During the discussions which have taken place in the Committee we have had the time and the opportunity to examine thoroughly the problem of non-proliferation. All delegations have made known their views and concepts on the various aspects. In addition, outside the Committee innumerable commentaries and statements of position have shown the interest which the problem of non-proliferation arouses in the international community. Excepting certain circles which, for reasons which are well known, are opposed to the idea of an international agreement to put an end to the dissemination of nuclear weapons, we think we can say that the expectancy and hope of arriving at the conclusion of a non-proliferation treaty are universal.

4. After all that has been said during the past few weeks it may seem audacious to wish to add further considerations on the subject of non-proliferation; and if I venture to make the few brief remarks which are to follow it is because, in view of the complexity of the problem and its exceptional importance, one is always tempted to go back to certain questions.

5. One of these questions which seems to me to merit the greatest attention is that of the link which exists between the prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons and general and complete disarmament; or, in other words, the question of the relationship between general and complete disarmament and a non-proliferation treaty considered in the spirit and the letter of General Assembly resolution 2028 (XX) (ENDC/161) as a step along the road to general and complete disarmament.

6. It can be affirmed, without wishing such an affirmation to be taken in an absolute sense, that the idea of general and complete disarmament was the inevitable outcome of the advent of the means of mass destruction and in particular of atomic weapons. Be that as it may, the fact is that every time a possible world war is mentioned it is always the threat of a nuclear catastrophe that comes to mind. Since the day it came into being that threat has never ceased to grow

(Mr. Christov, Bulgaria)

and to spread in all possible directions -- through improvement and increase of destructive power, the armaments race and quantitative stockpiling, dissemination and proliferation, the multiplication of the number of countries having nuclear weapons at their disposal, etc.

7. Parallel with this, the considerable progress of nuclear science and technology has placed atomic energy within the reach of all, which makes possible -- sooner or later -- the manufacture of atomic weapons by countries which might decide to manufacture them. Hence, at the present time it only remains for us to note that the atomic peril is increasing and becoming ever more menacing.

8. On the one hand there is the danger inherent in the stockpiles of nuclear weapons in the possession of a certain number of States. In the opinion of highly-qualified experts, the arsenals of the atomic era contain more megatons than would be needed to destroy every sign of life on earth. This is therefore an absolute danger which hangs with its enormous weight over all countries. The one and only conceivable means of eliminating this danger is nuclear disarmament.

9. In the message of 1 February 1966 addressed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Kosygin, to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, this problem was stated in the following terms:

"In order really to put an end to the danger of a nuclear war and to the nuclear armaments race, the Soviet Government proposes that the nuclear Powers should consider the question of carrying out immediately the programme relating to nuclear disarmament. Such disarmament must provide for the destruction, under appropriate international control, of all stockpiles of nuclear weapons accumulated by States, the prohibition of their manufacture, the complete destruction of all nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles and the prohibition of their production, and the elimination of military bases in foreign territories."

And Chairman Kosygin's message adds:

"Only such measures ... can free the peoples from the threat of a nuclear war." (ENDC/167, page 4)

That is the Soviet Union's position on the global elimination of the nuclear threat.

10. Other nuclear Powers, as is known, have adopted different positions, and it is precisely that which has so far prevented, and continues to prevent, a concrete approach to the problems of total nuclear disarmament. It is to be hoped that, bearing in mind the gravity of the situation created by the existence of the nuclear danger, negotiation with a view to nuclear disarmament will soon be resumed.

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11. But meanwhile the peril takes on new dimensions. The threat is no longer due solely to the increase in the global quantity of nuclear weapons. Another type of danger has complicated the situation and aroused the worst misgivings. I am referring to what is customarily termed diffusion, dissemination, proliferation or, more exactly, the increase in the number of possessors of atomic weapons.

12. Added to the existing danger, proliferation can create risks, both because of the threat which every new accession to nuclear power represents in itself, and also because it will introduce into international relations factors having unpredictable effects and immune from any control. It was precisely risks of that kind that were mentioned by the representative of Mexico in his brilliant statement of 13 June. Mr. Castañeda said in this connexion:

"It is acknowledged that one of the greatest dangers to peace -- even greater perhaps than a direct confrontation between the big nuclear Powers -- would be that other smaller countries, if they came to have a nuclear potential, however small, would be able to undertake an action which very soon would inevitably involve the great Powers and unleash a general atomic war."

(ENDC/PV.304, para.7)

In other words, every new atomic bomb in new hands will be not just one more bomb but an atomic fuse capable of setting off the nuclear powder keg. To make matters worse, the prospects -- if one can call them prospects -- of proliferation are such that in the very near future there will be more than one new bomb in the possession of more than one new country.

13. Hence my delegation believes that that is where the link has to be seen between the problem of non-proliferation and that of nuclear disarmament within the framework of a treaty on general and complete disarmament. Taken in isolation, a non-proliferation treaty may seem to be a measure of non-armament. And yet in our opinion, within the context of the nuclear threat and of the risks which in present circumstances accompany proliferation, a non-proliferation treaty acquires by its very objective, which is to restrict the number of nuclear triggers, the nature of a measure directly linked to the problem of nuclear disarmament. Of course, this does not in any way reduce -- but on the contrary adds to -- the need to include in the treaty provisions that would furnish a real legal basis for the concept contained in resolution 2028 (XX) that "The treaty should be a step towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament and, more particularly, nuclear disarmament".

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14. The Bulgarian delegation, just like the other delegations of socialist countries represented here, has always and from the outset of our Committee's work---expressed itself in favour of the elimination of the nuclear threat. I have just quoted the proposals to that end contained in Chairman Kosygin's message. Just a few days ago the representative of the Soviet Union and co-Chairman of this Committee, Mr. Roshchin, said this on the subject:

"The Soviet Union, as is known, has always advocated, and continues to advocate, effective nuclear disarmament. Guided by our position of principle, we regard the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a first step towards the cessation of the nuclear arms race, towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. ...

"For the Soviet Union there is no question of whether or not to accept provisions obliging the nuclear Powers to act in the direction of nuclear disarmament. We consider that the draft treaty on non-proliferation should contain provisions testifying to the willingness of the parties to it to endeavour to solve the problems of disarmament and, above all, the problem of nuclear disarmament." (ENDC/PV.313, paras. 15 and 16)

15. Such an attitude, were it to be adopted by the other Powers on which the conclusion of a treaty primarily depends, would without doubt enable the ground to be prepared for nuclear disarmament. We hope that substantial progress will be made in this direction.

16. However, we should bear in mind that negotiation on non-proliferation has to a large extent been rendered necessary and urgent by the existence of difficulties and obstacles which still obstruct the road towards nuclear disarmament. These difficulties are complex. The longer the armaments race continues and the more the number of countries equipped with nuclear weapons increases, the greater is the risk of those difficulties becoming more numerous. The proliferation of nuclear weapons leads to the parallel proliferation of the obstacles on the road to nuclear disarmament. Every delay in reaching an agreement on the problem of non-proliferation will make more difficult the conclusion of a treaty and, at the same time, the negotiations on the problem of general and complete disarmament. All the obstacles and all the difficulties which we are encountering now --- distrust, suspicion, security problems, guarantees, control, the peaceful uses of atomic energy, etc. --- will go on increasing in number and complexity as the number of States possessing nuclear weapons increases.

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17. In our opinion, that must be regarded as another link between the problem of non-proliferation and the problem of general and complete disarmament. There is reason, therefore, to consider that the non-proliferation treaty is rendered indispensable as a premise and a guarantee capable of ensuring the negotiation of a programme of nuclear disarmament within the framework of general and complete disarmament.

18. We have already said that specific obligations in that sense included in the treaty are bound to increase its value. Nevertheless, it can be pointed out that the effect of the non-proliferation treaty on the subsequent policy of States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, with regard to the problem of nuclear disarmament will not depend exclusively on the form of the declaration of intent to persevere on this road -- a declaration of intent which, needless to say, the treaty must include. The legal obligations of a treaty of this nature have definite importance. But is it not also true that the scope and significance of the non-proliferation treaty with regard to nuclear disarmament should be sought in its nature as a political decision to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to continue on the road of nuclear disarmament?

19. In our opinion it is precisely through this political content that the future non-proliferation treaty will assume its primary importance. Establishment by the treaty of the idea of non-proliferation means that at the same time another concept of the greatest importance comes to be established by an international instrument -- that of nuclear disarmament, of which the treaty will be the first step.

20. It is for these reasons and many others of the same nature about which we have spoken previously that the Bulgarian delegation considers that the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament should devote all its efforts in the days to come to bringing the negotiation of a non-proliferation treaty to a successful conclusion.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 317th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of Mr. Jozef Goldblat, representative of Poland.

"A statement was made by the representative of Bulgaria.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 1 August 1967, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.